

Application Number 10/698,131
Amendment in Response to Office Action mailed August 8, 2007

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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Original): A method for treating urinary incontinence comprising:
applying vacuum pressure to an instrument proximate to a urethral wall to draw a portion
of the urethral wall into a cavity in the instrument;
forming a hole in the portion of the urethral wall disposed in the cavity; and
implanting a bulking prosthesis through the hole proximate to a urethral sphincter.

Claim 2 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the bulking prosthesis is in a miniature
state at the time of implantation and assumes an enlarged state after implantation.

Claim 3 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein
forming the hole comprises forming the hole with a needle having a lumen, and
wherein implanting the bulking prosthesis comprises pushing the bulking prosthesis
through the lumen in the needle.

Claim 4 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the bulking prosthesis comprises a
hydrogel.

Claim 5 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the bulking prosthesis comprises a
material that absorbs fluid to assume the enlarged state.

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Claim 6 (Previously Presented): A system comprising:

a tubular instrument having a distal end and sized for introduction into a urethra of a patient, the distal end including a cavity;

a vacuum port to draw a portion of a urethral wall into the cavity;

a needle to make a hole through the urethral wall in the portion of the urethral wall disposed in the cavity; and

a pushing agent to push a bulking prosthesis through the tubular instrument and through the hole in the urethral wall.

Claim 7 (Original): The system of claim 6, further comprising:

a source of vacuum pressure; and

a conduit to deliver the vacuum pressure from the source to the urethral wall.

Claim 8 (Original): The system of claim 6, wherein the tubular instrument comprises the needle.

Claim 9 (Original): The system of claim 6, wherein the tubular instrument comprises a cystoscope.

Claim 10 (Original): A device comprising:

a bulking prosthesis in the shape of a partial cylinder having an inner radius, wherein the bulking prosthesis comprises a hydrophilic polymer that forms a hydrogel in the presence of water, and

wherein the inner radius of the partial cylinder is sized to conform to close the urethra of a patient when the bulking prosthesis is implanted in the patient with an inner surface coaxial with the urethra of the patient and when the patient exercises voluntary control over an external urethral sphincter.

Claim 11 (Original): The device of claim 10, wherein the bulking prosthesis has a substantially half-cylinder shape.

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Claim 12 (Original): The device of claim 11, wherein the bulking prosthesis assumes one of a miniature state and an enlarged state, and the prosthesis assumes the shape of the partial cylinder in the enlarged state.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The device of claim 10, further comprising a porous material surrounding the hydrophilic polymer.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The device of claim 10, further comprising a radio-opaque radiopaque material.

Claim 15 (Original): The device of claim 10, wherein the device includes a non-uniform cross-section.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): A method for treating urinary incontinence comprising:
applying vacuum pressure to tissue proximate a urethral sphincter;
implanting a bulking prosthesis in the portion of the tissue proximate to the urethral sphincter,
wherein the bulking prosthesis is in a miniature state at the time of implantation and assumes an enlarged state after implantation, and wherein the bulking prosthesis includes a long dimension of at least two millimeters in the enlarged state.

Claim 17 (Original): The method of claim 16, wherein the bulking prosthesis is a capsule-shaped bulking prosthesis comprising a length of at least four millimeters.

Claim 18 (Original): The method of claim 16, wherein the bulking prosthesis is a spherical bulking prosthesis.

Claim 19 (Original): The method of claim 16, wherein the bulking prosthesis is a partial cylinder bulking prosthesis.

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Claim 20 (New): The method of claim 16, wherein the bulking prosthesis comprises a first bulking prosthesis and a second bulking prosthesis, each of the first and second bulking prostheses comprising a partial cylinder bulking prosthesis, and wherein implanting a bulking prosthesis comprises implanting the first and second bulking prostheses in portions of the tissue proximate to the urethral sphincter on opposite sides of a urethra of the patient.

Claim 21 (New): The method of claim 20, wherein each of the partial cylinder bulking prostheses has an inner surface radius that is sized to conform to close the urethra of the patient when the patient exercises voluntary control over an external urethral sphincter.

Claim 22 (New): The method of claim 20, wherein each of the bulking prostheses is shaped as a partial cylinder having a substantially C-shaped cross section.

Claim 23 (New): The method of claim 16, wherein the bulking prosthesis is shaped as a partial cylinder having a substantially C-shaped cross section.

Claim 24 (New): The method of claim 1, wherein the bulking prosthesis is shaped as a partial cylinder having a substantially C-shaped cross section.

Claim 25 (New): The device of claim 10, wherein the bulking prosthesis is shaped as a partial cylinder having a substantially C-shaped cross section.